EVERY WEEK SINCE 1865

DEATH ON LABOR DAY: DAVID CORT

THE Nation

SEPTEMBER 1, 1956
20c

Upsala College
Library
East Orange, N. J.

Stick With Ike; Stuck With Dick

by R. T. McKenzie

Poet in the Cow Palace

by Kenneth Rexroth

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

On a Third Party

Dear Sirs: I was very much impressed with the communication from Sidney Lens. Here is a credo for all those of independent mind who have tried and failed as part of a third party. Also for many who are not so independent but are not reconciled with either big party line.

Your editorial, Comfort and Commodities, is a fine companion piece. What a wonderful piece of good fortune it would be to find an organization and candidates to run on such a platform!

GEORGE W. HULLINGS

Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Sirs: With reference to the letter of Sidney Lens, published in your August 4 issue, I will say that a third political party is of value; but to start one this year would be a disaster to our nation!

When I was National Chairman of the Farmer Labor Party of the United States, we had control of the two Dakotas, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. At times, we also held the balance of political power in states ranging between Ohio and Colorado. It was this vote which kept Senators Norris and La Follette Sr. in power for so long.

Today, when the Republican Party is giving away our valuable public resources to corporations, along with other evils, we must support to our utmost the Democratic Party, which has favored the poor man from the days of Thomas Jefferson. I call upon all liberals to unite under the slogan, "United we Stand, Divided we Fall."

C. B. WARNER

Biloxi, Miss.

Un-American Committee

Dear Sirs: You will not be astonished to learn that the American Civil Liberties Union still believes that the letter and spirit of the First Amendment make the mandate of the House Committee on Un-American Activities unconstitutional or unwise, or both. That has been the Union's belief ever since the committee was established in the late 1930s. Its current mandate is to investigate "(1) the extent, character and objects of un-American propaganda activities... (2) diffusion... of subversive and un-American propaganda... instigated from foreign countries or of a domestic origin... and (3) all other questions in relation thereto that would aid Congress in any necessary remedial legislation."

Inside or outside its mandate, the committee has heretofore usually limited its investigation of opinion and association to that which it has held to be related to illegal action. But large parts of the questioning in the recent hearings on two activities of The Fund for the Republic — the John Cogley report on blacklisting and the Plymouth Friends Meeting library award — have overstepped even the committee's own established boundaries. So this is the time to urge that no committee with such a mandate should be appointed when the new Congress convenes next January. (There are other committees on internal security, with much better mandates.)

The committee has conducted some proper inquiries, including the Hiss investigation of 1948, and its procedures are much better than they were. But the basic trouble is what it has been from the start: the committee's mandate is bad. This is the fault of the successive Congresses which have supplied its mandate, phrased entirely in terms of "un-American propaganda" — propaganda as such, whether or not related in terms of "clear and present danger" to illegal *acts*. Such acts, and propaganda so related to them, are proper matters for Congressional investigation; and, as the ACLU has frequently pointed out, the conspiratorial-action part of the Communist Party's activities can properly be prohibited and punished. But "propaganda" as such — speaking or writing *in and of itself*, whatever its source and however offensively "un-American" to Congress, as well as to you and me — is not a proper matter.

Any citizen or group of citizens — as citizens — and our alert and independent newspapers have the right to investigate and expose and denounce the speaking and writing of any other citizen or group of citizens. But that is utterly different from having any branch of a democratic government in a free society undertake such a task; it is the exact opposite.

PATRICK MURPHY MALIN
Executive Director,
American Civil Liberties Union

New York

Federal Supremacy

Dear Sirs: The legislature of North Carolina and the governor are trying to rush through amendments to our state constitution which would close public schools in order to get around the Supreme Court's ruling. In view of this, I would like to quote a clause from the North Carolina constitution which would make it clear that the Supreme Court ruling is paramount to any state regulation: " . . . Every citizen of this state owes paramount allegiance to the constitution and government of the United States and that no law or ordinance of the state in contravention or subversion thereof can have any binding force."

EUGENE FELDMAN,
Editor, Southern Newsletter

Winston-Salem, N. C.

In This Issue

EDITORIALS

169 ● The Nation's Choice

ARTICLES

170 ● Ike; Stuck with Dick
by R. T. McKENZIE

172 ● Poet in the Cow Palace
by KENNETH REXROTH

174 ● Portraits in the Cow Palace (drawings)
by JOHN MAASS

175 ● Death on Labor Day
by DAVID CORT

178 ● Britain's New Right
by PAUL JOHNSON

180 ● Security for Lawyers
by JAMES E. CURRY

BOOKS AND THE ARTS

182 ● Testament of a Socialist
by DAVID THOMSON

183 ● The Curtain Around Us
by ABRAHAM EDEL

184 ● Of History, Fiction, Language, (poem)
by JOHN CIARDI

184 ● *Theatre*
by STANLEY MEISLER

186 ● *Art*
by MAURICE GROSSER

187 ● *Records*
by B. H. HAGGIN

CROSSWORD PUZZLE
(opposite 188)
by FRANK W. LEWIS

George G. Kirstein, Publisher
Carey McWilliams, Editor
Victor H. Bernstein, Managing Editor
Robert Hatch, Books and the Arts

Freda Kirchwey, Editorial Contributor
J. A. del Vayo, European Correspondent

Harold Clurman, Theatre
B. H. Haggin, Music
Anne W. Langman, Television
Mary Simon, Advertising Manager

Staff Contributors: W. Macmahon Ball, Carolus, Maxwell Geismar, Keith Hutchison, Harvey O'Connor, Andrew Roth, Howard K. Smith, Alexander Werth, H. H. Wilson, M. L. Rosenthal (Poetry Editor).

The Nation, Sept. 1, 1956, Vol. 183, No. 9

The Nation, published weekly by The Nation Company and copyright 1956, in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 333 Sixth Avenue, New York 14, N. Y. Second class mail privileges authorized at New York, N. Y.

Subscription Prices Domestic—One year $7, Two years $12, Three years $17. Additional postage per year, Foreign and Canadian $1.

Change of Address: Three weeks notice is required for change of address, which cannot be made without the old address as well as the new.

Information to Libraries: The Nation is indexed in Readers Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, Index to Labor Articles, Public Affairs, Information Service, Dramatic Index.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1956
VOLUME 183, NUMBER 9

THE Nation
EVERY WEEK SINCE 1865

The Nation's Choice

THE GAVELS have banged adjournment at Chicago and San Francisco and *The Nation* is now prepared to register its choice. An innate aversion to premature bandwagons prompted us to delay indicating a preference until the nominees were known and a similar aversion to blank checks would normally prompt us to wait and see how the campaign shapes up. But events have already given the campaign a definite cast. For one thing, the Democrats have selected their strongest nominees and our consistent preferences among the Democratic hopefuls. On the other hand, by trying to exploit the President's popularity not merely to retain power, but to force the electorate to take Richard Nixon as an odds-on heir to the Presidency as part of a gift-wrapped package, the Republicans have presented all good men and honest publications with a compelling reason for supporting the Democratic nominees apart from the merit of the candidates themselves. It is this which has promptly aligned *The Nation* with the limited ranks of publications that will support the Democratic ticket.

For those who respect the office, it is intolerable that a President of phenomenal personal popularity and prestige should feel no apparent compunction about forcing the nomination for the Vice-Presidency of a man who could not possibly win the Presidency on his merits, but who now stands a good chance of "picking it up"—cheaply without a contest. It is an affront to the people. It demeans the Presidency. It bespeaks contempt for the democratic process. It is also in glaring contrast with Mr. Stevenson's willingness to accept the risks of an open convention. Seldom has the tendency of this Administration to substitute the manipulative for the representative theory of government been given more striking illustration. As in so many other matters, the President's advisors have acted as though his and their sole political responsibility were to "sell" the people pre-determined decisions. In this instance, the delegates were given the sole option of voting for Nixon or dropping dead. And voters in November will be given an option that is false in the sense that it makes the choice turn on matters not directly related to the record of the Administration or the needs of the future. Voters should not be asked to choose a President on the basis of what they think about the state of his health or his chances for surviving a four-year term. To do so is to exalt the man and denigrate the office; it is to convert an election into a lottery—a wager on the life expectancy of an elderly man who is not in good health.

By his handling of it, the President has made the concern about Nixon this year's paramount issue. For it is this concern that invests the question of the President's health with the dominant but thoroughly debasing importance it now possesses. Neither the President's health nor his age would necessarily be a decisive factor if it were not for the Nixon issue. No doubt we should always have been more critical in the selection of Vice-Presidents—we have tolerated too many "Indian Charlie" Curtises and Tom Marshalls (even then this country needed more than a good five-cent cigar)—but this is not the point, either. If the President felt that it was his duty to run despite his age and the state of his health, then he should have insisted on a genuinely open convention or taken the precaution of insisting that the Republicans name some one who would be "acceptable" not merely to him—the choice, after all, is not his—but to the American people. As it is, he has placed himself in the position of seeming to say, "Want to be Vice-President? Come up and see me sometime."

Even in his own party, Mr. Nixon is not widely regarded as measuring up to the Presidency. He has never been proposed for *that* office. The flouting of the democratic spirit implicit in the attempt to foist him upon the American people—upon the world—as a likely next President, all as part of a cynically prearranged package, takes on added gravity by reason of the fact that Mr. Nixon is not unknown. Quite the contrary; he is very well known and is disliked and distrusted by many in his own party and by some of the President's closest advisors. There is even some warrant for the belief that the President himself would be happier with another choice.

The objection to Mr. Nixon is not that he is "controversial"—Lincoln and Roosevelt were that—but that he lacks character. As Mr. McKenzie points out elsewhere in this issue, it is not even certain that his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

succession to the Presidency would bring the right-wing of the Republican Party to power despite his heavy prior commitments to these elements and the strong suggestion of a recent deal with Senator Knowland. Nixon is quite capable of being Right, Left, or Center, or a little of each, as may serve his purpose. He is the "faceless" candidate: the cardboard politician. In an attempt to describe what kind of President Mr. Nixon would be, the Wall Street *Journal* was forced to conclude that "No one can precisely describe the political philosophy of a Nixon Administration." Even his most intimate associates can't be quite sure; they merely express a belief that any administration he headed would be "in practice somewhat more conservative than Mr. Eisenhower's."

That noisy millions did not raise their voices in protest against Nixon's nomination proves nothing. One of the responsibilities of democratic leadership is to encourage people to participate in political decision-making. Too many Americans already feel that they have lost the power to influence the course of events. Each time the decision-making process is faked, their apathy increases. And each time a key decision is manipulated, it becames a little easier to manipulate the next one. It is cause enough for concern that the President's personal popularity has been so cynically exploited, without regard to his health or well-being, by the interests that dominate his Administration; but these interests could prove to be benevolent indeed by contrast with those that might dominate a Nixon one.

San Francisco's moment of truth came when Joe Martin banged the great gavel and shouted: "Take Joe Smith and get out of here so we can get along with the convention."

IKE: STUCK WITH DICK

Meanings for the Future . . by R. T. McKENZIE

San Francisco

THE PRESIDENT, said one Republican spokesman here, has no "physical excuse" for conducting a less vigorous campaign than he would have before his heart attack of a year ago. The word "excuse" somehow dramatized the essential pathos of Dwight Eisenhower's position at the Republican Convention of 1956. Most of the great war leaders, both civilian and military, of this and every other nation have long since left the arena of public affairs. Eisenhower almost alone has continued to bear—except for his two years at Columbia—crushing responsibilities in high office in Europe and America. Despite his diligent efforts at load-shedding, which have involved both long hours on the green fairways of the Burning Tree Country Club and the devolution of the powers of the Presidency, the strain has taken its inevitable toll. Manifestly he is a tired and sick man, desperately in need of convalescence, and in no condition whatever to continue to carry the heaviest political burden in the democratic world.

This sort of situation is common enough in the prize ring. The aging champion, tired and showing signs of punch-drunkenness, should clearly retire from the ring while his faculties are still intact. But the champ's backers, the tough operators who own a piece of him, will not hear of it. They hint that it would be cowardly to quit now; they produce medical evidence to prove he is in better shape than ever; clearly he has no "physical excuse" for throwing in the towel.

Where in the history of democratic political leadership can one find a leader who has enjoyed the uncritical adulation that is showered on Eisenhower? Franklin D. Roosevelt no doubt stirred greater enthusiasm among those who admired him, but he also had enemies by the million who loathed and hated him, who prayed for his downfall, who told dirty stories about his wife and family. Most of the other famous Presidents have stirred conflicting passions in the breast of the nation. Certainly Woodrow Wilson did, and so did Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. Much the same applied in the case of great and colorful political figures of other countries. Winston Churchill and Lloyd George were both loved and hated. Mackenzie King of Canada, the greatest vote-getter of them all, was the center of bitter controversy throughout his life and long after he had grown cold in his grave.

Yet after talking politics in the United States from coast to coast in the past six weeks, one must report that hardly a single "ordinary" American could be discovered who harbored a positive dislike for Eisenhower. Criticisms of the work of his Administration in foreign affairs or defense or taxation policy or in agricultural matters are common enough. But as Stevenson remarked in Chicago, "no one seems to connect Eisenhower with the Eisenhower Administration."

Eisenhower, it has often been remarked, tends to think of himself as a Constitutional monarch and in a sense he has every right to do so. The American President is head of state and Eisenhower has fulfilled these functions of his office as successfully as any of the monarchs of Western and Northern Europe. His success in this capacity has been so complete that it has obscured his performance in the other two roles

---

R. T. McKENZIE, noted British political commentator, covered both the Democratic and Republican conventions for The Nation *and the* BBC. *The author of* British Political Parties, *he is on the staff of the London School of Economics.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the President must play under the American political system. As Chief Executive, his record is mediocre; as party leader he must be judged a failure. Nevertheless the general public in this "era of good feeling" appears quite undisturbed. And the tough boys who "own a piece" of the President no doubt vastly prefer it this way.

Listening to Joe Martin and Senator Knowland and the rest vying with the most innocent delegates in maudlin praise of the President, one could not help but reflect on the staggering opportunity given Eisenhower to make good on his professed purpose of reforming the Republican Party. Admittedly he has done much, more than his opponents can admit in an election year, to modernize and liberalize the party. But clearly he could have wrung from these frightened men who are so vividly aware of their dependence on him anything he wished had he been prepared even to hint that he would not run again if they refused to grant him the concessions he sought.

It is not difficult to understand the happy pattern of the future as foreseen by the Republican right-wing. They take it as axiomatic that if Eisenhower's health holds up he will be a certain winner in November. Thereafter, he will be a weak Chief Executive and an even weaker party leader. He will become the first President prohibited by the provisions of the Constitution from standing for a third term. If in addition he is a semi-invalid, he is likely to be hardly more than an amiable observer of events. And among the most interesting of these events will be a bitter struggle for the machinery and for the soul of the Republican Party.

Whether Eisenhower lives out his term or dies in office, the most important single contender in this contest will be Richard Nixon. He will be the first Republican who has made his political reputation in Congress who shares or at least has shared the sympathies and prejudices of his Congressional colleagues, to reach the White House (albeit by the back door) since Harding. In the long years between, and especially in the past twenty years, the Congressional Republicans have had to grit their teeth and watch the conventions, in search of a candidate who could win, nominate governors and business men and generals—all of whom turned out to be liberal internationalists. Now at last the long night is ending; in heir-apparent Nixon, the Congressional Republicans see one of themselves about to place his hands firmly on the levers of power.

Drawing by Berger

There may, of course, be a flaw in this calculation. Nixon's credentials, from the point of view of the Old Guard, are admittedly good. As Congressman and Senator he gave little evidence of thinking dangerous thoughts. But it is just possible that the Congressional Republicans are dwelling too fondly on the early career of Richard Nixon. As he has revealed in his brilliant handling of his own candidature for re-nomination, he is one of the most astute politicians in American public life. And he would not need to be very astute to recognize that Eisenhower's brand of liberal Republicanism is a far more potent vote-getter than the last-ditch conservatism of his former colleagues in Congress. It is just possible that Richard Nixon would rather be President than be Right.

The first clue to the nature of the Nixon Presidency will be provided by his performance in this campaign. It seems highly likely that he will attempt to live down his reputation as the "vice-hatchet man" of his party. The prospects, first of victory for his party in November and subsequently for his succession to the leadership, will depend on his ability to convince the American electorate that he is a worthy successor to Eisenhower.

In the field of policy, the one issue of any interest here at San Francisco has been the Republican effort to devise a form of words in their civil-rights plank which would offer

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some hope of recapturing the Northern Negro vote without totally alienating the South. They have produced a slightly stronger and in some respects more courageous plank than the Democrats', but it is doubtful whether it will achieve either purpose. The Republicans do at least formally "accept" the Supreme Court decision and they do "concur" in the ruling that the decision should be put into effect with "all deliberate speed." There is no clever loophole such as that provided for themselves by the Democrats, who described the decisions of the Court as "part of the law of the land," with the clear implication that other "parts" include the state laws designed to prevent desegregation. The Republicans also specifically endorse the Eisenhower six-point civil-rights program, which was bottled up recently in the Senate. The colored voters may find this preferable to the vague Democratic pledge to "continue the party's work to eliminate illegal discrimination of all kinds." But there is no pledge to work for the alteration of the debating rules of the Senate and without it the remainder of the Republican plank means little.

It seems unlikely that either party's statement on civil rights will be of much importance in the campaign, although the oratorical gloss on the two statements provided by the rival candidates may carry a good deal of weight. Northern Negroes are unlikely to vote, one would suspect, on the basis of their assessment of the rival planks; they are likely to be attracted either by the personality of Eisenhower or by the Democratic Party's reputation as a friend of the lower-income groups. The South, or most of it, will surely stay in the Democratic column, since this will strengthen its veto on civil-rights legislation in the Senate.

Poet in the Cow Palace . . by KENNETH REXROTH

San Francisco

MY FIRST reaction on being asked to do a piece on the recent events at the Cow Palace was one of mild horror accompanied by slight nausea. This is a world I avoid as much as possible. I don't vote. I don't go to conventions even for journalistic purposes. I don't know any Republicans. I felt, in fact, much like Edmund Wilson did the time he was asked to be a movie critic. I was pretty sure what I would say in the article. I have been to other nominating conventions, long ago. I expected tub-thumping, ballyhoo, sabre-rattling, flag-waving, the circus of syndromes of that most insecure of all men, the professional politician.

As the Republican headquarters in the Fairmont Hotel began to take shape, it looked at first as though that was the way it was going to be—television cables all over the lobby, Pepsicola girls in bottle-top bathing suits, stunts and flashlight bulbs going off in all directions. But now I have to take it all back. This convention has been thoroughly expertized. Everything was quiet, dignified, confident. It is obvious that the experts, the stage managers and speech writers, decided from the outset to play it cool. "You are selling a sure thing. Don't foul it up with too hot a pitch." This is the way you sell a high-class car which has no competitor in its price range.

I feel that this convention was not just the combined brains of the best advertising agencies of America. It was a reflection of something all these people believe as a patent fact. As far as this Administration is concerned, the business community does not manipulate the government, it *is* the government. I had expected something like the last big General Motors show. This is more like a meeting of General Motors stockholders, and I don't mean this sarcastically. One thing: for anyone who remembers fights like those over McAdoo, the League and the Klan, it isn't much like old-fashioned American politics.

* * *

I had intended to write a "color story". There just wasn't enough color to write about. The meeting of the board of directors of a giant corporation, is not, unless you're Mike Gold, very good copy for a poet seeking color. The power élite may well be a conspiracy of mediocrity—but possibly power, if it is vast enough, demands mediocrity. These are the same Buick dealers and small-town bankers, by and large, who came to Chicago in 1952. Meanwhile, they have been running the country, at least as minor deputies. Possibly the Republican foreign policy has been ambiguous and provocative, the domestic policy socially destructive in the long run, but if so, these people never heard about it. They are supremely confident, secure in a way politicians seldom are. "Peace and Prosperity—We Did It." Obviously they believe it.

This belief is on every face. Not just smugness, but real confidence, like a country banker weighing a farm loan. Even Senator Knowland, in the first important speech, largely on foreign policy, hardly got excited (for him, at least) when he got to his favorite subject of Red China, and he was a veritable demagogue in comparison with Governor Langlie's keynote speech. The governor, calm and a little countrified, stumbling once in a while over a word, just *knew* he was right.

* * *

This, of course, is all the General Line, the facade of speeches, of followers, delegates, the great crowd of well-dressed people all solid for Ike. Behind this facade "powerful forces" were supposed to be struggling. During the earlier stages, at the mention of the Vice Presidential nomination a kind of melancholy descended on the average delegate I talked to. They repeated the party

KENNETH REXROTH, poet and literary critic whose work has frequently appeared in The Nation, *wandered into the Cow Palace not of his own volition.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

line, just a very little bit frightened or depressed that I should have brought it up. You get the feeling the typical delegate knew "they" had already decided the matter one way or another. This is, to say the least, a rather ominous psychological development of the sort we are accustomed to think of as un-American. It is not a steam roller. All conventions have their steam rollers. It is more like democratic centralism. And democratic centralism is, we should remember, merely the methods of business administration, whether U.S. Steel or Fuller Brush, applied to politics.

* * *

Nobody I talked to had any specific objection to any actual policy of Vice President Nixon's. "He was a little radical in some of the things he said in the last campaign, but once he got in he's made a wonderful Vice President." "Do you think he would make a good President?" This is met with superstitious disapproval: "I'm sure Ike will be around a long time yet. We don't need to worry about that." "Suppose Ike came out against him?" "Oh, that would be different. But he won't. Dick's a fine boy. I'll tell you, this is all a lot of newspaper talk. They just want something to sell papers." This is a low level of political thinking. It is also irresponsible, utterly unlike the inside-track garrulity of the old-time American petty politician. These are delegates who, in turn, have delegated their authority to some dim region behind the clouds. No doubt, if given the word they would have turned to some other candidate sanctioned by that authority. No doubt plenty of them would just as soon have seen another candidate, since right up to Nixon's nomination there was—and no doubt still is—a vague feeling that his name might cost votes.

All this is very strange to watch. Maybe there is something about the social and economic structure of society all over the world today that conspires to produce this kind of political action. Unanimous political action, for instance the Republican Party's support of President Eisenhower, is one thing, the "politics of unanimity" is another.

Parenthetically, which is all it is worth, the second day's activities, with the reading of the platform and speeches by Martin and Hoover, passed almost unnoticeably in a gentle breeze of generalities, leaving only a vague impression that President Eisenhower was running against Mao Tse Tsung and Harry Hopkins.

* * *

As I come into the huge livestock show auditorium, like a dirigible hangar packed with human beings, an old timer at covering these things says to me, in a Front Page, side of the mouth, husky voice: "Sweet are the uses of adversity." Everybody has a paper with the headlines, "Dick Flies to Stricken Father. Stassen Gives Up." Even I am not this cynical. Maybe you have to feel yourself caught in it someway to be cynical at all. I am certainly not caught, and I am surprised at how tolerant of it all I am. I just feel removed—ethnological—like I was visiting a meeting of the Han Lin Academy or a philatelists' convention.

As I watch the seats on the floor filling up, I realize the real heart of the matter. Except for a few hundred inconspicuous people, no matter where they are sitting, this building is filled with an audience. I go out and circulate around. Everybody feels real bad about the Vice President's father. Everybody seems relieved that there isn't going to be any trouble. It doesn't look as though there would. *Time* Magazine has reached town, and my Midwest friend of yesterday seems to have read it like dowagers read headlines —crosswise. "It's people like Reuther don't want Nixon. But we don't want Reuther, either." I haven't heard that Mr. Reuther came to town.

The big day gets on with a Civil Rights speech, a hot issue if there ever was one, again very cool, the applause quiet and dignified. More ballyhoo from Tom Dewey than anything so far, his speech seems almost as much the injection of the folkways of another epoch as did that of Herbert Hoover the day before. It sounded like something from one of his own campaigns. The audience welcomed it, they were beginning to need some campaign oratory, they were pleased to meet somebody still vigorously running against Harry Truman.

* * *

Halleck's nominating speech again played it cool, "stood on the record." At last the delegates had a brief good time going nuts for a while in good old convention fashion. I must say it started out as quite a demonstration, a real act of participation. Possibly in the politics of unanimity, participation is religious; I felt like I was being socked in the eye by the collective unconscious. And then I began to realize that it was not really that at all. It was far more a performance than the mass explosions which occurred at the Roosevelt conventions. Joe Martin was able to cut it short after some fifteen minutes. It was participation, it was even, for most participants, spontaneous, but it was not hard to stop. Of course I realize this has something to do with TV schedules, but it was stoppable, and I doubt if the 1936 Democratic convention outburst could have been turned off, TV or no. Once again, the hokum of the seconding speeches came as a relief, too. And then, down the line with the Vice Presidential nominations, with only Mr. Carpenter's little joke as an interruption.

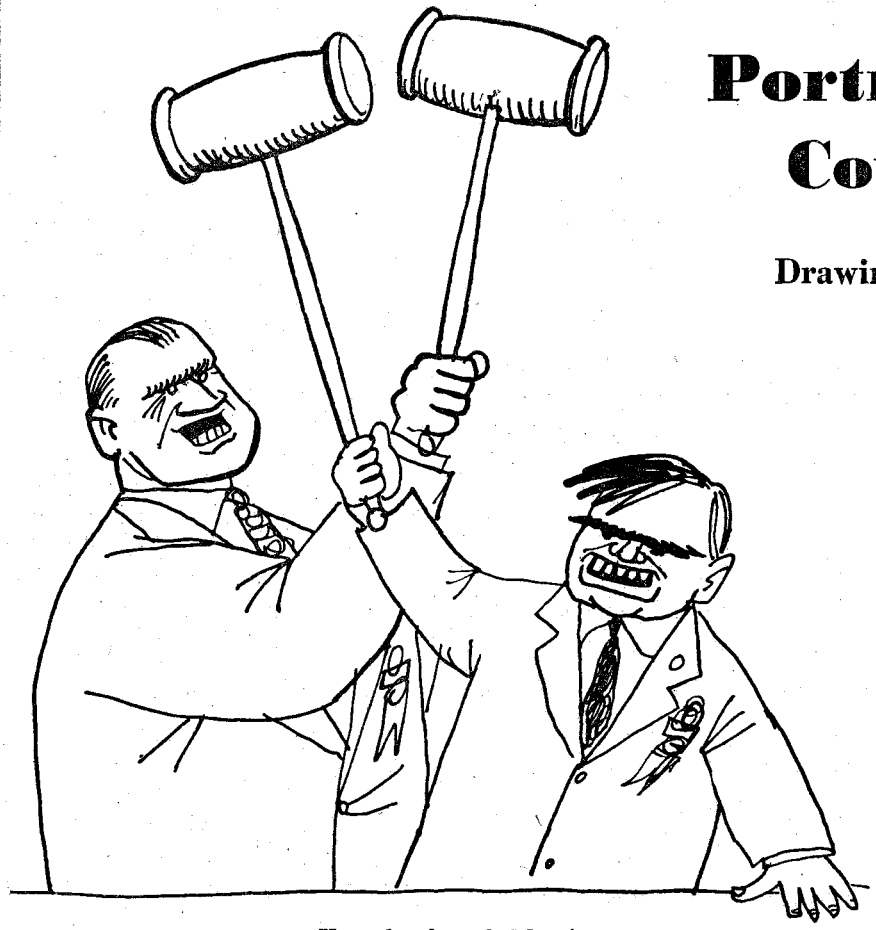
* * *

I'm sorry I couldn't give you a good hot colorful color story, but I do believe I have seen the rise of a new kind of politics, a new color of the American political mind, or at least a very big section of it. I have tried to indicate something of that psychology. All over the world today there are indispensable men, and now we have two in the Republican Party. I wonder, if it can happen to the Republican Party, maybe sometime it can happen to the country as a whole. I don't really want to sound like a Democrat, but I just don't like unanimity. And so down to catch the last mail plane for New York and to bring my red ribbon and bronze medal home for the baby to play with.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Portraits in the Cow Palace

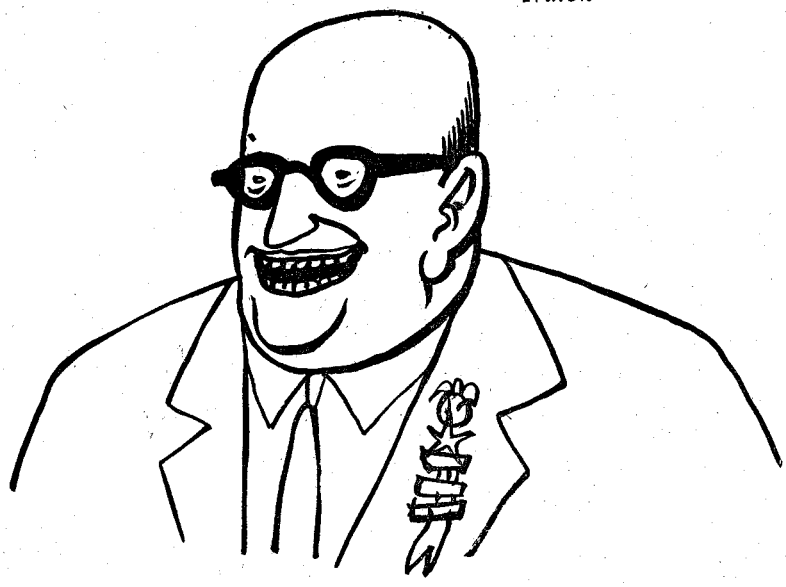
Drawings by JOHN MAASS



Knowland and Martin

Nixon

Stassen



Leonard Hall

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DEATH ON LABOR DAY

The Killer and the "Saviour" . . by DAVID CORT

THE PRINCIPAL killer of children in the United States is not pneumonia, malformation, polio, gastritis, enteritis or any disease. It is the automobile. In an average year in which 11,000 children aged one to fifteen are killed by accidents, the automobile killings come to nearly 5,000. Over half these children are on foot or on bicycles when struck down.

The semi-official saviour of life in the United States, the National Safety Council, puts out an annual compilation of statistics called *Accident Facts*. The N.S.C.'s heart is obviously in the right place. Yet its handling of this massacre of innocents merely demonstrates the masterly statistical art of how to get an ugly fact lost.

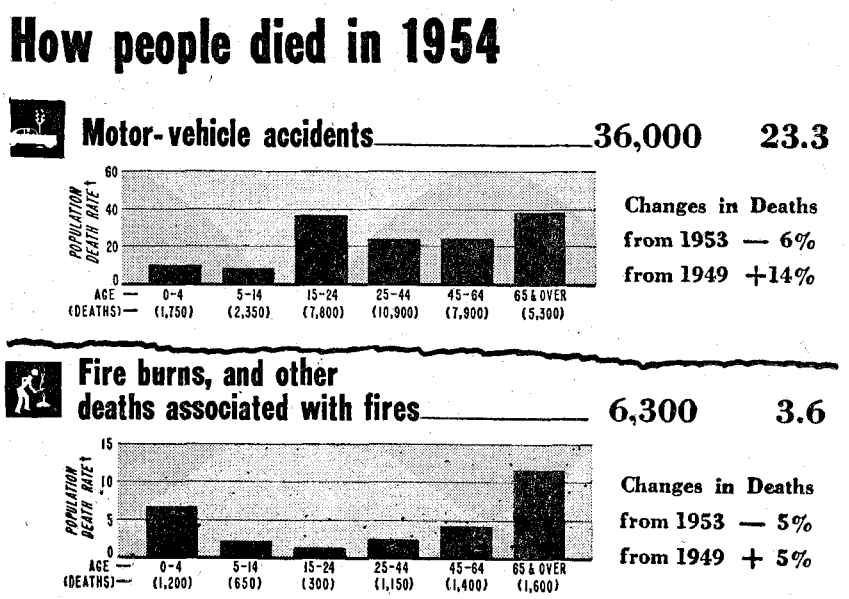
This is how it is done: On the opening page of the 1955 edition a chart shows that accidents *in general* kill almost as many children as all other causes combined. There is a tall black column for accident deaths of children from one through fourteen years old, but the proportion due to *traffic* accidents is not given. On page five, the principal killers by age groups are shown to be "mechanical suffocation" up to age four, and "drowning" in the five-to-fourteen group. Most readers will not notice that this tabulation includes only "non-motor-vehicle" accidents. Back on page fifty-nine, if you know what you're looking for, a complicated table yields the secret of the absolute total of deaths of children by automobile. For 1954 it came to 4,100, and another 215,000 were injured. How many more died of their injuries a few weeks or months later is not given. Perhaps another four thousand.

The National Safety Council, Chicago-headquartered, is a non-profit association supported by over a million members whose names it never releases. The funds given to it are good tax-deductible contributions. It is proud to announce that General Motors is "very active" and contributes funds beyond the ordinary corporate dues assessed corporation members in proportion to payrolls. Naturally, General Motors doesn't want to play the star part in the National Safety Council's annual book of accident statistics. The book, with ninety-eight pages, devotes only thirty to automobile accidents; the rest ramble among railway accidents, home, farm and office accidents, warehousing accidents, etc., etc. These tend to obscure the motor-vehicle type, the death roll that haunts Detroit, and to spread the guilt of recklessness among all people everywhere.

The official saviour is thus also the industry that gives us the homicidal weapon. The angel hovering over us with streaming eyes turns out, at the critical point, to be the angel of death who characteristically cloaks her face a little and throws in the non-profit service of a book of statistics. The angel has carried away since 1913 nearly 1,150,000 Americans. She has variously smashed another fifty million, who seem to have survived the week or month, though in some degree broken. I make no claim for the National Safety Council's figures—they are sometimes on the low side compared with other sources' figures — but only N.S.C. statistics will be used here, for reasons of justice.

ESPECIALLY around the Labor Day weekend just coming up, the National Safety Council year after year has acted out the role of that ambiguous angel hovering over us all. A review of its efforts, as reflected in the New York *Times*, will be appropriate here.

The Labor Day weekend of 1951



These charts, extracted from a page in the National Safety Council's Accident Facts, 1955 Edition, *read at a glance as if children's deaths by motor-vehicle accidents were less in 1954 than those caused by fire or drownings. But the scale is different; note that it is 20-40-60 for the top chart and 5-10-15 for the bottom. For the real story, read the totals printed in small type, in parantheses, under each black column.*

DAVID CORT, *author of* The Big Picture *and* The Calm Man, *is a frequent contributor to* The Nation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had really frightened the N.S.C. In the seventy-eight-hour period between 6:00 p.m. Friday and midnight Monday, the nation's cars had ignored the council's prediction of 390 fatalities and destroyed 461 Americans—a record. The next year the N.S.C. predicted 480 deaths for the whole weekend. Monday rains in the populated East drove the weekenders home early and the death toll was only 432. The N.S.C. let itself be credited with saving forty-eight lives.

Somewhat emboldened in 1953, it predicted that forty million cars on the weekend roads would kill only 440. The prediction appeared as always in Saturday's papers, which nobody reads. A terrible heat wave, that had promised a record turnout and holocaust, broke on Saturday but the threat of hurricanes sent many home early again. The death total was way down at 368. The N.S.C. had "saved" seventy-two more lives. However, late returns brought the dead to 405 and the saved to only thirty-five. These later figures were buried in the press.

The weather was fine in 1954 and motorists were encouraged to visit the disaster areas hit by the hurricane. Come on out; hit the road, was the sense of the propaganda. However, the Giant-Dodger series on TV kept a lot of people safe at home. The prediction had been 390 deaths; the first actual total was only 334 (fifty-six saved). However, the sum crept quietly up to 364 (only twenty-six saved).

BY 1955, before the Labor Day weekend, the N.S.C. was telling everybody that the chances of a highway accident in the United States were steadily dropping. The plucking of the flower, safety, from the nettle, danger, was due, it explained, to "enforcement, engineering and education," for all of which N.S.C. took some bows. After "this array of comforting statistics," it predicted 400 deaths for the weekend, presumably aiming high so that it could "save" a few lives. It was an ordinary fair-to-cloudy weekend and something went awfully wrong. The deaths jolted up to 438, as if reaching for the terrible 1951 totals. Friday's bland dream had turned into Tuesday's nightmare.

I don't blame the council for its kindhearted miscalculation. It can happen to anybody who fools around with predictions. I can't even predict what the N. S. C. will predict this year for the Labor Day weekend. I would guess that the forecast in Saturday's papers would be around 450, maybe up to 470. In an election year when everybody is quarrelsome, and with more cars than ever on the roads, I would further guess that the actual deaths will be around 450 (I am not trying to "save" anybody). Of course the weather will put in its word, too. We might even set a new record-high, I mean.

THE REAL criticism of the National Safety Council, as of so many other supposed mass benefactors, is that what pays off for it is that *it seems to want* to be a benefit—something quite different from really *being* a benefit. Being a real benefit sometimes requires one to be ugly toward one's friends. The highway problem can be solved; but its solution would offend people that the N. S. C. has no intention of offending. Quite unconsciously, the N. S. C. even avoids thinking such thoughts. What follows are some unsubsidized thoughts.

Firstly, all motor-vehicle traffic in the United States cannot be considered as a unity. The country breaks down into populated and unpopulated zones; its roads into thruways, rural roads and city streets. The N. S. C.'s apparent conclusions, drawn from the total of all traffic everywhere, not only have no relevance for most of the drivers now on the roads—they are almost exactly the opposite of the correct conclusions.

Furthermore, the deaths and injuries break down into two or perhaps three categories. The drivers, and to a less extent their passengers, are taking a deliberate risk for a desired benefit; they all want to go some place fast. These are the people who trigger the terrible projectile. The drivers at least are under license; they can be sharply controlled by the police power, as Governor Ribicoff has so brilliantly demonstrated in Connecticut. About 28,000 of these people are killed a year, essentially by their own hand.

The other category is of people going afoot on their appointed rounds or sometimes even sitting in their backyards or living rooms when the terrible projectile found them out. These people need no license to cross the streets, which they own as members of the sovereign power. These are the people whom the state has an antecedent obligation to save.

In the cities, only 3,800 drivers and passengers are killed a year; the very congestion slows them down enough to save them. But in the cities, in 1954, 5,000 pedestrians were killed.

Outside the cities, the situation is very different. No breakdown is available between rural roads and thruways. But driver-passenger deaths in rural areas in 1954 were almost 24,000 against only 3,100 pedestrian deaths, including bicyclists.

A FREQUENT outcry in the cities is to punish pedestrians severely for risking their lives, and to formalize the rules for crossing streets. The statistics demonstrate that these particular saviours are not only drunk with unconstitutional car-arrogance but are giving us the worst possible advice on how to survive. The figures show that crossing a street with the light is twice as dangerous as crossing against the light; and crossing in the middle of the block, though bad, is only about as dangerous as crossing at the corner.

As everybody who can walk knows, when you cross at the corner, you can get it from any one of four directions. When the lights are with the pedestrian, the turning traffic can crawl up your back or whirl into your face or blandly run you down against the light or block you in the middle of the street until you are trapped when the light changes. To say that drivers should have more consideration or manners or decency to do any of these things does not help the old lady faced by fifty tons of projectiles all in a hurry to get through, over or around her. The drivers will never change their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spots unless forced to do so. When the lights go red and one driver keeps on going, he is invariably followed by three more. "If he can do it, why not me?"

However, we must return good for evil and give some merciful thought to the man in the projectile. Where and how does he die?

Here the truth is plain, surprising and very, very instructive. By present theories, the long, straight, beautifully empty roads of New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada and Wyoming ought to be the safest in terms of numbers of deaths per 100 million vehicle miles. In fact, those roads are by far the most dangerous roads in the nation for the driver and his passengers. (Kentucky, South Carolina and Alabama are grouped behind them.)

The safest roads are those where there are the most cars and the most law: the District of Columbia and the whole populated Northeast plus, for some reason I am unaware of, the states of Washington and Nebraska, which trail immediately after.

IN ABSOLUTE numbers of traffic deaths, California—second most populous state by the 1950 census—consistently leads all the rest, followed by Texas (fifth most populous in 1950). But populous states like Illinois, New York, Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania, which show up badly on Labor Day weekends are in fact a third or a half less dangerous than California measured by year-round records.

The average daily nation-wide death by automobile is around 100. Three days' deaths would therefore be around 300. Add the inevitable additional cars on the roads on a three-day weekend such as Labor Day and the "normal" death toll for three days will be around 400.

The National Safety Council's hullabaloo about the holiday holocaust may have some tiny deterrent value, but in fact it always points a moral that is false. It draws attention to an inevitable small increase in accidents in New York, Illinois and Michigan which are, in fact, among the safest states. The killing in Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas is not especially accelerated by Labor Day; these states need no added excuse; they kill without glancing at the calendar.

Yet if N. S. C. propaganda is not the answer, we must still search for an answer, for our very lives, as once men searched for the typhoid germ and found it.

Is there a germ? Are there predisposed killers and maimers on the roads? On this question, a curious and unexpected light is thrown by a survey of motor-vehicle deaths by nations, rating deaths against motor-vehicle registrations. My eyes bugged and my jaw fell as I saw that the standout, undisputed champions were dictatorships of the present or the recent past.

The Dominican Republic is the king of them all, with 91.6 deaths a year per 10,000 motor vehicles. Next in order come Colombia, Japan, Guatemala, Italy and—this makes me wonder—Jamaica. The Dominican Republic, where every hundredth car kills somebody every year, is in the interesting position of being able, if it had 100 times as many cars as people, to wipe out its whole population in one year on the roads. (How to have fun with statistics.) It should be remembered that the list of reporting nations is not complete; omitted are all the Moslem states and nearly all of Asia and Africa.

There is a strong suspicion that driving safety has some relation to the individual's respect for the rights and lives of others, as inculcated by the culture and history of his country. A man cannot really respect himself under a dictatorship and so cannot very well respect anybody else. He may be gay rather than grim about it all, but he is a potential, though frivolous, killer. Killing by automobile begins to make some sense when viewed as an expression of disrespect for fellow-citizens.

Of the "good" nations in terms of driving safety, nine of the first thirteen speak English. The United States is second with 7.2 deaths a year per 10,000 motor vehicles.

But once again it must be emphasized that the United States is not all the same from sea to shining sea. The good showing is entirely the work of the great mass of motorists in the populated areas. Our uniform superiority to the dictatorships is severely shaken if we look only at Nevada, for example, which has a death rate close to 20 per 10,000 motor vehicles. In absolute numbers, Nevada (with many more cars, of course) kills more people every year by automobile than the Dominican Republic, Guatemala or Jamaica, out of a much smaller population. Probably the world championship in motor-vehicle killing can be awarded Nevada without any further deliberation.

Yet it must be admitted that an automobile is close to a necessity in such states as Nevada, California and Texas, and will so remain as long as the fuel supply lasts. Wholesale revoking of licenses will not work.

BUT BEFORE we start worrying about Nevada, I would like to return to pedestrian deaths, the slaughter of the innocents. Spontaneous respect for one's fellow-man is too large and subtle a matter for subsidized propaganda. An enforced respect is a desperation remedy, but the time may have come for it. I think that any driver who kills a pedestrian should lose his license for a minimum of ten years, with special penalties for killing children and the aged, except in cases where the fault lies *exclusively* with the victim. An attachment against the income and real property of the killer would be a most effective deterrent; a parole system or abrogation of rights as a citizen could be held in reserve. The drivers must be taught somehow, if necessary by threat and punishment, that a license to trigger a projectile is not a right, but a limitation and responsibility.

As pedestrian deaths decrease, I believe it will be found that all other highway deaths will decrease too. As the licensed driver is taught to respect others, he will come also to respect himself as a driver.

The difference in Nevada's problem is that there the driver, rather than the pedestrian, is doomed. Detroit could help save him if it would produce no car capable of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more than fifty miles an hour, but only a federal law could compel Detroit so far. Some device that would oblige every thruway driver to slow to a crawl every twenty miles might help: say, a road-block, a detour or an unpaved stretch of road. If the fatal disease is recognized, somebody will find the cure. The disease here is high speed on the straightaway.

Too many cures endeavor to retain both the disease and the patient. Shatterproof glass and stronger car frames should have eliminated most of the driver-deaths; instead, they gave the driver a heightened feeling of omnipotence. Now it is the safety belt that is expected to cut the 28,000 driver-passenger deaths to 18,000 a year. The individual who doesn't install it is a fool. But he will have to guard against another burst of omnipotence that may carry him to his death.

The reactionary but perhaps correct long-range view is that the automobile, as transportation and recreation, has hit the law of diminishing returns. The glow of power it once harmlessly gave the driver and passengers is now dog-eared and socially dangerous.

BRITAIN'S NEW RIGHT

Search for the Upper "U" . . by PAUL JOHNSON

London

THE LAST twelve months have seen something approaching a revolution in the English intellectual climate. The few thousand middle-aged, liberal, progressive-minded members of the pre-war middle class, who have created educated opinion in Britain for close on a quarter of a century, are becoming uneasily aware that their monopoly is over. A younger generation is not merely knocking on the door, but kicking it down with its feet. Those who came to intellectual maturity after 1945 are now, after ten years working underground, scrambling into positions of power and influence; and the strongholds of culture are falling to them one by one. The suddenness and rudeness of the assault are themselves disconcerting. Even more alarming, however, is the realization, now dawning on the graying mandarins in office, that their cherished moral, political and esthetic values have no meaning for their younger colleagues; that they are watching the birth of that rare and terrifying phenomenon—a right-wing, anti-rationalist intelligentsia. Small wonder, then, that the publication of George Scott's *Time and Place*—described as "the first full-length portrait of a post-war intellectual"—has been greeted with a chorus of horror, dismay and fear.

PAUL JOHNSON is assistant editor of the *New Statesman and Nation.*

The elders were expecting some sort of reaction from the younger generation; they were not prepared for a new invasion of barbarians.

Yet some sort of explosion was inevitable. The liberals had held power for too long, and their rule had shown an increasing tendency to become absolute. Nurtured in secure middle-class homes, educated at Winchester and Oxford, governing Britain from their civilized citadel in Bloomsbury, they had acquired control, in the inter-war years, of all the vital machinery of English culture. During their heyday in the thirties, their progressive, humane and largely Socialist views had come to be accepted not so much as opinions but as eternal verities. The most influential writers—Auden, Spender, Warner, Greene, O'Casey, Orwell, Connolly, Isherwood—were all in their ranks. So was every leading critic, from Desmond MacCarthy to Raymond Mortimer. In Strachey, Crossman and Laski they had the three most effective political propagandists. They controlled all the most intellectually respectable organs of opinion—*New Writing*, the Left Book Club, the *New Statesman* and the *News Chronicle*. They dominated the London School of Economics. Gradually they enfiladed Oxford and Cambridge. By the time the war came they had captured the BBC and a score of other public institutions. A measure of their influence is that, at the height of Churchill's war-time fame, his broadcasts could not command the audience enjoyed by J. B. Priestley's famous fireside chats.

The Labor victory of 1945 consummated their victory. It also brought stagnation, decay and disillusionment. Their most active members passed into public life—and intellectual silence. Others became corroded with success and turned to purely literary pursuits. The dynamic of the movement—a protest against fascism and unemployment—ceased to exist. Many of its members, indeed, became bored and irritated with the austere and increasingly egalitarian society they had helped to create. They also became, unconsciously, members of the Establishment, and their literary muscles slackened from disuse. There were a few public renunciations: Priestley, for instance, resigned from the Labor Party, and left the board of the *New Statesman.* But it was, in the main, a silent drift into neutrality and indifference.

Meanwhile, a new generation of intellectuals was being forged. They were young men from the harsh North and Midlands, lower-middle class or working class in origin, who had fought their way up from the grammar schools. The welfare state gave them access to the universities; full employment and the boom in mass communications brought them rapid promotion to positions of power. But with success came instant

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vicky

Apostle of Britain's New Right: Malcolm Muggeridge, Editor of Punch.

disillusionment. Having clambered onto the middle-class plateau, they found that the paradise they expected to discover there had ceased to exist: the taxation and restrictions required to facilitate their ascent had destroyed it. "The most common reward today for success achieved through legitimate, taxable channels," writes Mr. Scott, their spokesman, "is to find a boot crunching firmly on one's presumptuous head." "Here we are," he adds, "with our degrees and our posh education, our prideful positions in the public service, our ambitious names in print, trying to get on with the work brought home in the bulging brief case, while the baby cries in the next room or even in the same room, or while the mortgage slowly and respectably strangles the life, the love, the adventure and the talent out of us."

In their resentment they turned not only against the administrative architect of their miseries—the Labor Party—but against the humanist and progressive values with which it had become identified. A great part of Mr. Scott's book is devoted to an assault, at once violent and patronizing, on Stephen Spender and John Lehmann, the two most persistent champions of Republican Spain. Equally harsh is Henry Fairlie, another spokesman of the New Right. "The real guilty men of the thirties," he proclaims, "are the intellectuals of the Left." A third member of the group, the young and talented novelist Kingsley Amis, dismisses all imaginative writers as "the legion of the lost," and proudly lists the books "I have not read and do not intend to read." John Usborne, the twenty-six-year-old author of *Look Back in Anger*, a strange and compelling play now playing to packed houses in London, preaches a gospel of nihilism and discontent.

HOW TO explain the unholy alliance of these savage young men with the unbending old-Etonians of the Tory Party? "The revolutionaries," George Scott writes, "have bred a generation of counter-revolutionaries"; and he makes it clear that resentment is the principal motivating force in the New Right. But it would be uncharitable—and also inaccurate—to describe it as the only one. Indeed, it is possible to discern four distinct causes of the revolt against the Left. The first is undoubtedly the influence of Professor Oakeshott who, ironically enough, succeeded Laski at the London School of Economics. The failure of the Left to avert the catastrophe of 1939 led many intellectuals —including H. G. Wells—to question the validity of its belief in progress; but Oakeshott has given the most complete formulation to these doubts. In his inaugural lecture, on political education, he described mankind as a ship sailing over "a boundless and bottomless sea in which there is neither harbor for shelter nor flood for anchorage, neither starting point nor appointed destination," and where "the seamanship consists in using the resources of a traditional manner of behavior in order to make a personal friend of every inimical occasion." It is not surprising to learn that Oakeshott reserves his principal admiration for Hobbes.

THIS distrust of reason, which some have termed the "New Obscurantism," but which is, in reality, simply a return to the skeptical Toryism of Burke, is doubtless linked to the revival not so much of belief, as of interest in religion. It is a subject of hot debate in Britain whether young people are, in fact, returning to the churches, or even to fundamentalism. But what is certain is that they show a marked will-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ingness to reopen the discussion on subjects which their elders dismissed as profitless. The Spain of the younger generation is South Africa; and their heroes are not the soldiers of the International Brigade but Christian missionaries like Father Huddleston and Michael Scott. The more sophisticated among them claim that this return to metaphysics is simply a reaction against excesses of the logical analysts; but they all share an increased respect for the traditional values of a more stable age—a reflection, perhaps, of the uneasy times in which they live.

Such feelings, of course, are not confined to Britain; what is, however, more specifically English is the obsession of its younger generation with class. One of the principal forces which drive young intellectuals—despite, or rather because of, their humble backgrounds—into the arms of the Tories, is their yearning for acceptance and social recognition. Class distinctions in Britain are almost invisible but terrifyingly real; and intellectuals are particularly aware of them. It is no accident that *Encounter,* now established as the leading intellectual monthly, owed its overnight success to the publication of an article by the Honorable Nancy Mitford on class usage in the English language. The younger generation are particularly sensitive on the subject because they realize that while the welfare state has brought them education and power, it cannot make them socially desirable. Hence their dislike for the older liberals, who are. Hence also their strange affection for the Tories, who have much to offer them in this respect.

THERE remains a fourth cause: the Beaverbrook press. Lord Beaverbrook is a great creator of journalists and a great corrupter of men. Believing, as he does, that "rebels make the best journalists," he has always recruited his writers from the young men of the extreme Left. But in the thirties, they seemed able to survive the experience. Such men as Tom Driberg and Michael Foot emerged from the Beaverbrook machine, after highly successful careers, to pursue even more successful careers as Labor M. P.s Since the war, however, Beaverbrook has fared better.

One of his victims is George Scott himself, who did a spell on the *Daily Express.* Another is Robert Edwards, until recently the brilliant editor of *Tribune,* the Bevanite weekly, and now a faithful exponent of Tory doctrine on Beaverbrook's *Evening Standard.* There are other, even more lamentable, cases. The younger generation, whatever its other merits, has never made a virtue of incorruptibility.

Such a curious combination of influences does not constitute a valid basis for an intellectual movement; indeed, it is perhaps misleading to refer to this collection of young men—who are really only united in their predicament—as the New Right. They turned to the Tory Party in the late 1940s mainly because it was the only alternative to a party against which they were intellectually and emotionally prejudiced. It proved—as many of them are now realizing—a sorry alternative. The Tories conspicuously failed to forge any genuine doctrinal bond with their new adherents; and their intellectual ginger-group in the House of Commons, led by Angus Maude, has made little impression on the world at large or, indeed, on the Tory leadership. Since Sir Anthony Eden's crushing electoral victory in 1955, there has been a catastrophic collapse of morale within the party's ranks and wholesale desertions among its younger followers—of whom George Scott, as he states in his book, is one. Whether they will turn back to Labor is doubtful. Mr. Gaitskell's cautious empiricism, which is now finding expression in a series of Labor Party policy documents, has little appeal to these young men. They are turning increasingly to the attractive brand of political cynicism preached by Malcolm Muggeridge, the editor of *Punch,* who has suddenly, after many years in the wilderness, found himself with a large following. This, perhaps, is the most disturbing feature of all: after twenty-five years of liberal humanism, British intellectual life is slipping into the hands of men who have abandoned reason, and who are now in the process of losing even faith.

Security for Lawyers . . by JAMES E. CURRY

WHEN President Eisenhower signed the social-security amendments on August 1, he brought joy to the hearts of many aging women and disabled workers. Working women may now retire on pensions at age sixty-two instead of waiting until sixty-five; totally disabled persons may now receive pensions at fifty. But perhaps more significant in the long run is the new coverage for self-employed lawyers, dentists, osteopaths, veterinarians, chiropractors, optometrists and naturopaths. (What is a naturopath? Don't look in Webster's Collegiate; it isn't there.)

Social security was first devised for the benefit of wage workers. Some may argue—and have argued—that the amendment bringing the lawyers under it signals their entry into the proletariat. It would seem more accurate to say that they are graduating from a vestigial proletariat into an all-inclusive American middle class.

In the 1830s a young French lawyer named Alexis de Tocqueville, seeking to identify the "American aristocracy," wrote that he found it "not among the very rich, who have no common tie," but in occupation of "the bench and bar." He added that the lawyers were trusted by the people and so constituted "the most

JAMES E. CURRY, a practicing lawyer in the District of Columbia, served on the Social Security Committee of the District of Columbia Bar Association.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

powerful existing security against the excesses of democracy." But in the course of time the lawyer joined the rest of the population in the service of private business. By the time of the depression he had been rendered as humble, as propertyless, as proletarian—and as indignant—as any of us.

IN 1935 and thereafter, however, there took place a token realignment of the classes. Leland Baldwin says that "The New Deal . . . may be credited with an attempt to build a middle class, not necessarily of white-collar workers, but of manual workers who possessed enough property to acquire the middle-class respect for the sanctity of property." This attempt was largely successful. The concept of job security was created. Union pension funds, vaster than the social-security funds themselves, were built up. In them the working-class citizen had a property interest, or one analagous thereto. But more important, because more universal, was the introduction of the social-security card as an emblem of the citizen's share in the reserves established by law. Some lawyers may argue that social-security rights are not private property because they may be altered by Congress. But that is true of other property rights, such as the ownership of gold bullion.

As Marxists will bear out, the proletariat does not consist of the working class as a whole, for almost everyone works. It is less extensive, being composed of the workers who "have nothing to lose but their chains." There were plenty of these in 1935, but when FDR gave them all social-security cards, he endowed them with a sort of property (aside from their chains), the loss of which might be feared in case of social upheaval. He thereby transformed them, psychologically, into middle-class folks. At least, he "planned it that way."

This accomplished, what was left of the proletariat? Can anyone deny that there remained only those who lacked social-security cards? These were the hard working but largely propertyless lawyers, physicians, naturopaths, etc. Accepting social security in 1956, the lawyers were following the workingmen, but they were also taking a step back up the ladder that they had previously descended.

Not that the leaders of the American Bar Association saw it that way. For more than fifteen years, they had resisted the step as a *downward* one. But did they, during this period, reflect the views of the rank-and-file lawyers? Congressmen finally insisted that the A. B. A. membership be polled. In August, 1954, the organization's House of Delegates resolved that the local presidents be requested to "sound out their members with respect to the matter of inclusion (in social security) of self-employed lawyers." It began to look like the end of resistance. But one final ruse was attempted at the very last moment.

Congress had already provided for coverage of ministers of religion on a "voluntary" basis. It was expected, naturally, that the ill and the needy among the clergy would accept coverage and the others would reject it. This special treatment was accorded ostensibly to preserve separation of church and state; actually it does the opposite by providing still another indirect subsidy for the preaching profession.

THE MEDICAL, dental and legal leaders should have known that while the preachers had gotten away with this deal, their own members never could. Nevertheless, they tried. In "sounding out the views" of members, the A. B. A. presidents asked whether they wanted (a) voluntary coverage, (b) compulsory coverage, or (c) no coverage. Not unexpectedly, the lawyers overwhelmingly favored the same treatment for themselves that had been given the clergymen.

But Congress never had any intention of granting it. And to the lawmakers, seeking guidance on how lawyers felt about the alternatives actually available—compulsory universal coverage or no coverage—the results of the polls were quite useless. Finally, another poll was demanded and supplied which accurately submitted the true alternatives. The lawyers voted overwhelmingly for compulsory coverage. The District of Columbia bar endorsed it unanimously.

The meeting of the A. B. A. House of Delegates that considered the results was a sad affair. Chairman Allan T. Oliver of the Committee on Unemployment and Social Security announced that his group was still 6 to 1 against inclusion. "That which is temporarily popular," he said, "is not always permanently sound." William Logan Martin of Birmingham, Alabama, said that "We do not have to be forced by all the lawyers in the United States if it is against our judgment. I think it is better to continue to be right than to be popular." But James D. Fellers of Oklahoma said: "Every day during our present membership campaign, we have run into an obstacle because of the A. B. A.'s position on social security." The governing body then voted for coverage by 100 to 25 and notified Congress accordingly.

The American Dental Association followed a procedure so similar to the A. B. A.'s that it looked like collaboration. The American Osteopathic Association held out in opposition to a point where bills excluding its members had passed both Houses of Congress. At the last minute a national convention dictated a reversal of policy, and the bill was changed in Congressional conference.

NOW THE only holdouts are the medical doctors. The general attitude of their leaders is exemplified by their opposition to the disability-benefits provision of the social-security law which they call "a first step in a comprehensive federal medical-care system." They refuse coverage for themselves as a matter of principle. The American Medical Association refuses to take a national poll. Some local polls have been taken, but mostly in the meaningless form first used by the lawyers. The medical profession looks like the lone, sad remnant of that great depression proletariat to which we—most of us—belonged and which FDR sought to supplant. But one day the rank-and-file doctors, like the rank-and-file lawyers, will take matters into their own hands.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS and the ARTS

Testament of a Socialist

CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM. By John Strachey. Random House. $5.

By David Thomson

CLEMENT ATTLEE once wrote to the late Professor Harold J. Laski: "Although you are a theorist and I am only a working politician, I think that I give more and you less attention to changes of conception than to legislative achievements." Although Laski became chairman of the British Labor Party he never became a member of Parliament or held ministerial office. John Strachey was Laski's close colleague not only in the Labor Party but in the selection committee of the pre-war Left Book Club which did so much to propagate intellectual socialism in England during the nineteen-thirties. Since 1945 he has been M. P. for West Dundee, and was successively Under-Secretary of State for Air, Minister of Food and Secretary of State for War in Attlee's governments. Strachey's new book reflects the greater "attention to changes of conception" that this experience of governing responsibilities has brought, and which Laski never attained.

Laski as a political theorist was torn perpetually between the basic liberal impulses he inherited and imbibed from his English upbringing, and the doctrinaire Marxism which intellectually he adopted. Strachey likewise, in the thirties, tirelessly expounded Marxist theories of society and the state, and credited Marxists alone with an understanding of "the science of social change." Now he is concerned to discover where Marx went wrong, to scrap those elements of the creed that no longer match experience and to propound a more systematic philosophy of democratic socialism. As he puts it:

> Many of the most disastrous miscalculations, both of the orthodox economists and of the Marxians, have arisen from pursuing theorems with inflexible logic in social and political environments to which they no longer apply. (That is why the expression of economic views by a layman like myself, who can attempt to mate such economic knowledge as he has with fairly varied experiences as a working politician, may not be useless.)

Briefly, his argument is this. Capitalism has shown a powerful trend towards "oligopoly" (i. e. the number of the *dramatis personae* who produce and sell in any given industry has become so few as to cause highly significant changes in the working of the economy). This knocked all logic or reality out of classical economic theories which presupposed competition between large numbers of makers, sellers and buyers. It meant that capitalism, as Keynes showed, was not after all self-regulating. It needed a regulator, which could only in the end be the state. The state, too, has meanwhile evolved on similar lines—at least in the United States and Britain—for politics have been reduced to a choice between two big parties. But because both parties must appeal to universal suffrage to gain votes, political power unlike economic power has been more and more widely diffused. "The main trends in the political and economic fields are running in opposite directions." So the great question arises, "Can modern capitalism and modern democracy co-exist?" Strachey's answer is that they can and do—at least in the United States and Britain—but that they are unlikely to co-exist indefinitely or peacefully unless capitalism gives way to democratic socialism, and unless democracy is constantly extended both in time and space.

The central interest in his book—the first of several projected volumes on the general theme of democratic socialism—lies in his infusion of liberal ideas into the Marxian matrix of his thinking. Is the outcome fusion or merely confusion? He echoes J. S. Mill's faith that "truth will out" in free debate in a free society. There is even an echo of Burke (or is it only of Attlee?) in his insistence on the "immensely precious" value to working democracy of "a rich pattern of long established institutions," and on "an all-embracing, all-penetrating democratic climate of opinion." But there is some residue of Marxist dialectics, too, in his affection for the dogmatic dilemma so beloved of Laski ("either poverty will use democracy to win the struggle against property, or property in fear of poverty will destroy democracy"); in his belief that we are witnessing necessarily "the last stage of capitalism"; and in his persistence, even whilst abandoning economic determinism, in speaking of the "political superstructure" of society but of its "economic foundations." He is, like Laski again, over-fond of escape-adjectives like "decisive" and "dominant." And, after demonstrating the economic fallacies in Marx's economic analysis, he adds "there was nothing basically wrong with Marx's economic insight. It was his political judgment which was at fault."

STRACHEY is, I think, wrong in giving Marx's economic analysis such a clean bill, and in attributing the falsification of his predictions so exclusively to the growth of democratic pressures, important though these were. He is less than just to the political, as well as the economic, insights of the late Lord Keynes when he dismisses him as "an intellectual snob" who was not historically minded and too ignorant of the wage earners. These two errors are connected, for Strachey greatly underrates the anti-capitalist forces inherent in liberalism itself, no less

DAVID THOMSON, *Fellow of Sidney Sussex College and lecturer in history at Cambridge University, is the author of* Democracy in France, World History from 1914 to 1950 *and other books.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than in radicalism, and of these Keynes was one significant expression.

But there can be no doubt about the intrinsic topical interest and value of the book he has written. It sets out to be (and it has been criticized in draft by Hugh Gaitskell and other Labor Party leaders) a serious re-thinking of Labor Party doctrines, and of their relevance to contemporary Socialist politics. It is, despite dreary patches, both provocative and constructive. It is the political testament of a front-bench British Socialist who has, with great intellectual honesty, fought and thought his way through to a coherent theory with enough traditional English empiricism in it, and enough conservative respect for traditional procedures, to make an important impact on the behavior of the Labor Party. It marries economics and politics in at least the right sort of way.

The Curtain Around Us

MARTIN BUBER. The Life of Dialogue. By Maurice S. Friedman. The University of Chicago Press. $6.

By Abraham Edel

MARTIN BUBER is generally reckoned as the leader of the Judaic wing of contemporary existentialist philosophy, deeply rooted in the mystical Hasidic tradition. His influence on many fields of thought and practice has been strong and is growing steadily. In his writings he has put his finger on many of the ills that afflict the spirit of man in the modern world—the sense of being pushed around and treated as a thing, the loneliness of spirit out of contact with its fellows, the consequent introverted subjectivity and counterpart flight to absolutism, the schism of thought and action. And he has traced the manifestation of these evils in many realms, spelling out in rich detail how they affect the intimate relation of teacher and student, character and personality, the links of man and man in society and the attitudes to God in religion—even down to a critique of conversation in the modern world: the way it emerges distorted into personal monologues without genuine meeting of spirit.

These evaluations of evil proceed from a unified conception of men's good. Buber's thinking centers upon the I-Thou relation, a dialogue or meeting which is present, immediate, unitary and in which a man reacts with his whole being. Buber sees this living personal dialogue in religious terms, consummated in relation with the Eternal Thou. It is sharply contrasted with the I-It relation, which is practical and involves *using* nature or people. It includes all science, for pure science too keeps the world at a distance for the purpose of observation. Even a poet looking at a scene and sensing it as a poem is already exploiting it for production. Evil is the predominance of the I-It, in turning away from God. But in spite of all these makings of a system, Buber, like other existentialist philosophers, is the enemy of system. He stresses the concrete particular meeting, and rejects universalization, whether it takes the form of reliance on rules in ethics or an exaggerated place for the law in the Jewish tradition. There is no avoiding the insecurity of the present and no way to face it but by the living dialogue.

Professor Friedman's book is a comprehensive exposition of Buber's outlook. An apt use of quotation lets the magic of Buber's phrase shine in. The book traces background, analyzes special issues such as the problem of evil, summarizes central works bringing out fundamental ideas clearly and in considerable detail and outlines applications in theory of knowledge, education, psychology, ethics and social philosophy. The last of these is of special interest because of the prominent role that Buber's Zionist labors have played in his life. Here again his emphasis is on organic community to overcome man's dissociation today. He regards the Jewish communes in Palestine as the most promising experiment along lines that are socialistic but avoid forced centralization.

Professor Friedman does omit one essential ingredient: there is no critical evaluation. For example, there is no attempt to separate phenomena from interpretation, or to ask whether the same recommendations in ethics, education, interpersonal relations, could issue from a wholly different philosophical framework, and therefore how closely Buber's fundamental outlook and his values are integrated. Other philosophers are invoked to show either how Buber influenced them, or how their thought corroborates Buber's, or how they misunderstood him. Nor does the author really come to grips sufficiently with the question of how science fits into the picture—whether the awareness induced by knowledge reacts on the quality of the I-Thou relation or inevitably impersonalizes actual living. Unless this is dealt with, the suspicion will remain that the sharpness of the major I-Thou and I-It distinction may be tinged with irrationalism and oriented to shunting science into a secondary role. Finally, a more critical treatment of Buber's approach to the problem of evil seems required,

ABRAHAM EDEL is a member of the Department of Philosophy at the City College of New York and author of The Theory and Practice of Philosophy *and* Ethical Judgment: The Use of Science in Ethics.

John Strachey's

controversial interpretation of the forces which are revolutionizing the capitalist economy

CONTEMPORARY CAPITALISM

by the author of *The Coming Struggle for Power*

$5.00. RANDOM HOUSE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

especially when we are dealing with so sensitive a thinker whose experience carried him through the period of the Nazi outrages. Although this problem is used as a unifying theme throughout the book, and it is always clear what Buber is against, the author never really develops the proper "distance" at which he could ask whether Buber's notion of the redemption of evil is so much a resolution of the problem as a combination of faith and an indomitable spirit.

THEATRE

Stanley Meisler

New Orleans

"NOBODY outside of New Orleans gives a hoot about Ewing Poteet," claims Ewing Poteet, a smiling, rumpled ex-fiddler, as he goes about his business of trying to whirl the excitement of theatre into the heart of New Orleans. He plies one of the odd American trades. About 1,500 miles from Broadway, Poteet, drama critic for the New Orleans *Item*, covers the waterfront of theatre — the amateur clubs, the touring companies, the college shows. He covers the stuff few give a hoot about.

No one seems to care if Poteet dulls or excites taste for theatre. No one cares if he is foolish or brilliant, if he upholds theatre or sneers at it, if he knows how to write. Yet most Americans turn to writers like Poteet when they want news and comment about theatre. At least 140,000,000 Americans do not read Brooks Atkinson every morning. The words of the New York *Times* drama critic or his Broadway colleagues make no impression on millions who, by harsh chance, live outside metropolitan New York.

The forty-four-year-old Poteet, in his seventh year as *Item* critic, is more than just his newspaper's theatre man. Most non-New York critics are the drama-music-movie-radio-television-nightclub-book-phonograph-art editors of their outfits. While Poteet does not dabble in all these beats, he does have an added chore: he spends half his journalistic hours covering the civil courts of New Orleans.

Fifty per cent courts, 25 per cent music, 25 per cent theatre make up the 100 per cent Poteet. You can't blame the *Item* or any other newspaper for cutting up its culture man. There just isn't enough theatre in cities outside New York to fill the forty-hour week of a reporter.

When Poteet applied to the *Item* in 1949, he was a musician without a job. Concertmaster for the New Orleans Summer Pops Orchestra, Poteet, who had played with the Cleveland, St. Louis and Kansas City symphonies, failed to make a winter orchestra connection that year. With no previous writing experience or college education, Poteet approached editor Clayton Fritchie, now top man of the *Democratic Digest*, for a job as critic. Fritchie asked for samples. Poteet returned home to Kansas City, reviewed every concert, play, movie, book he encountered, and mailed reams to Fritchie, who promptly hired him.

FOR three years, Poteet's work was 50 per cent movies, 25 per cent theatre, 25 per cent music. But the film houses complained, for Poteet had discovered that not all movies were better than ever, and the managers had discovered that some New Orleanians hearkened. The *Item* shifted Poteet to the courthouse and

STANLEY MEISLER, newsman in the New Orleans bureau of a wire service, at one time reviewed plays for the Middletown, Ohio, Journal. *Harold Clurman,* The Nation's *regular theatre critic, will shortly return to these columns.*

Of History, Fiction, Language

Just as no one works for a living in Oscar Wilde,
and practically no one does in Henry James,
so there are histories that eat no bread, or not enough,

and others that are bread alone, or armies alone,
or mistresses alone, or diplomats alone, and none that, sufficiently,
eat, fight, bounce baby, and talk six dialects at once.

My daughter, at one, discovered that the negative of O.K.
is No-K, and Victoria (somewhat older, but only that)
discovered and said: "We (meaning 'my Us-ness') are not amused,"

which, coming from an Us-ness was automatically an Of Course,
but added *what* to the resources of language? whereas
my daughter is tongue enough for all futures. And she is mine,

recorded in this history and no other. A scoop.
A people with enough daughters in their memory
will not vote wrong. May she correct Election. I

swear here by Persian, Peloponnesian, and Punic that no
trumpet ever in time called to its commonplace troopings
any but private fathers of the Extraordinary,

lovers of ineluctable Herselfs, and unique sons of Places, who,
ranked in the lie-agreed-upon, one hour on stage
did nothing much, and all their life in the wings

put meanings to the tongues that count the kings.

JOHN CIARDI

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

installed the city hall reporter as part-time film critic.

The transfer of Poteet spotlights the way American publishers find critics and criticism expendable. Poteet, easily the most respected New Orleans critic, does not always get appropriate courtesy from his own newspaper. "The *Item* never puts my review in more than one edition," says Poteet. "And it's just slapped wherever they feel like putting it." But the *Item* does slap it somewhere, giving New Orleanians a chance to mull over the musings of a responsible theatre critic. But what good do these musings of Poteet and other non-Broadway reviewers do for the American theatre?

In general, Poteet will agree with Roger Dettmer, drama critic of the Chicago *American,* who says that "in the realm of professional theatre . . . non-Broadway critics — with such exceptions as Chicago, San Francisco and possibly Los Angeles — do nothing for theatre. Most cannot write, few speak with more authority than patent prejudice, most serve as publicity agents in the sense that their review may be considered 'space' for free. Mediocrity is fostered as art; amateurism as something gloriously more; a gift as developed talent or even mature artistry." Poteet hastens to add that he is not one of those Dettmer has in mind.

BUT Poteet does use a sliding critical rule. "I have two standards, one for local college and amateur groups and the other for touring professional companies," he explains. "When the professionals come and ask you to lay an awful lot of money down, you ought to expect something pretty good. In turn, the professionals should expect Broadway reviewing."

Even with this double standard, however, Poteet does not politely glance the other way when an amateur show cracks. "Briefly and baldly," he wrote after seeing a local group in the Ruth and Augustus Goetz adaptation of *The Heiress* by Henry James, "Mr. Cahlman (the director) does not seem to have read his script with all the attention it deserves."

Poteet is not always convinced the failure of a well-known play is the fault of New Orleans actors. He did not, for example, like the amateur version of Calder Willingham's *End As A Man.* But he quickly exonerated the acting; the play itself was at fault. "Unless this production conceals all its virtues, which we do not believe," he wrote, "*End As A Man* is not a play at all, but almost literally a charade — a charade that spells out in large block letters the author's bitter resentment of some of the more pathological features of military school life. . . . In three acts of turbulent whoop-de-do, nothing really happens."

The professional version of *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial* came to New Orleans right after local amateurs had done the show. Unfortunately William Bendix, like a sick Riley, mumbled through a Captain Queeg role he apparently had not fully memorized. The pros put on a terrible show; the amateurs had been excellent.

Poteet commented calmly on the condescension of professional companies that tour the outposts of American stepculture. "All we know," wrote Poteet, "is that the professionals deserve little of either audiences or their sponsors along the way when their road performances reek of the backward elocution class' spring recital. The greatest lack of [New Orleans] theatrical life is a healthy, flourishing professional theatre, not to supplant but to be complemented by 'tributary' non-professional groups. But if we thought *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial* was the best professional theatre can do we'd say let's shut up shop and stick to the amateurs.

"We want professionals," he added. "We want them sorely. But we want them only on terms of mutual respect."

PERHAPS here is our key to Poteet, a discerning, responsible non-New York critic. His job gives him only limited time to worry about theatre. His experience contains no background of theatrical problems. Yet he must make palatable to a television-and-movie-trained audience the amateur stuffing of local artisans and the professional doles from a charitable, snobbish New York. As far as Poteet can see, the New Orleans amateurs often prepare a tasty dish; the professionals often stumble on the way. Between New Orleans and New York there is no mutual respect.

Poteet's cry for mutual respect, if America is ever to have real theatre outside New York, is vital. Professionals must concern themselves with the tastes of their far-from-Broadway audiences. They must understand the men who help mold these tastes. They must give a hoot about Ewing Poteet.

Your Book Published!

Our famous royalty plan launched 627 authors. We publish, advertise, distribute. Send manuscript for free report or write for Brochure B.
PAGEANT PRESS, 130 W. 42nd St., N. Y. 36

TO AUTHORS
seeking a publisher

Send for our free, illustrated booklet titled To the Author in Search of a Publisher. It tells how we can publish, promote, and distribute your book, as we have done for hundreds of other writers. All subjects considered. New authors welcomed. Write today for Booklet No. 103. It's free.
VANTAGE PRESS, 120 West 31 St., New York 1
In Calif.: 6253 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 28

Service for Our Readers from Our Readers' Service

If there's ANY book you want to buy—you can do so without leaving the comfort of your home. Simply let our Readers' Service Department do your shopping.

Here's all you have to do: send us the name and author and, if possible, the publisher of the book. We'll have it sent directly to you.

If payment is received with your order the books will be sent you post-free; if sent COD, you will be charged the regular price plus postage.

No COD's outside the United States.

Address your orders to:

The NATION
Miss O. Le Pach
Readers Service Department
333 Sixth Avenue, N.Y. 14, N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ART

Maurice Grosser

WHY IS so little mural painting being done today? The blank walls of our severe buildings in the contemporary style cry aloud for decoration. The clients of these buildings are certainly rich enough to pay for painting and we have plenty of painters around. The principal difficulty, I suspect, is one of subject matter. Nobody can think of a story worth painting.

In a finished picture subject matter does not seem very important. It tends to disappear behind the much more striking idiosyncracies of the painter's style. A picture of a countess and one of an inhabitant of a *maison close* differ principally for the spectator in that one is by Degas and the other by Toulouse-Lautrec. Nevertheless, the two simple notions—that one of these ladies was respectable and the other was not—were the generating ideas which made the pictures possible.

Subject matter in this sense—something that interests the painter enough to keep him at his best throughout his labor—is particularly difficult in the case of mural painting. Here the subject must be broad enough to interest a great many people and at the same time complex and personal enough to inspire the painter. In the past the stories of Christian iconography, royal grandeurs and pagan myth furnished neutral subject matter, interesting to everybody and accepting from the painter any amount of elaboration. The stories embodied a way of thinking normal to the time. The painter was expected to illustrate and embroider, not to convince.

Today, the subjects found fecund in the past give as much trouble. Commerce and industry, the life of Christ, the pleasures of middle-class life (so productive for the impressionists), the noble workman, the history of our country, or the statement of a political creed—all these, when treated on the walls of a public building, tend to become a form of advertising instead of painting.

Some painting of this sort was attempted in this country under the WPA. As we all remember, it generally took as subject some mild form of political or social betterment and proved to be so completely without interest that almost no mural painting has been seen here since. There has also been a great deal of mural painting of this order in Mexico during the last three decades. But these pictures can scarcely be called real painting. With their simplicities and violences, they are rather examples of the political poster, and are as useless to our contemporary architecture as are the competent and shallow optimism of highway billboards.

IT IS A question, I think, of the painter's sincerity. With these impersonal generalizations as subject matter the painter finds himself doing a form of commercial art. He is illustrating ideas which he has reason to believe are approved of by his client. He is addressing himself, not to his client, but to a vague entity he knows only as his client's public, and he must do this using his client's words. Whereas real painting, to have any sort of integrity, must be painted about things which interest the painter himself.

Consequently, a good mural painting in the past has always been a large picture of the things the painter liked to paint, and differed from his easel pictures only in size, visibility at a distance and scale. Modern architecture could be satisfied with pictures such as these. But large pictures in the representational style, painted of something which was of personal interest to the painter, are rare and probably expensive.

Since pictures with subject matter have proved to be so difficult to paint and to find, the standard decoration of new buildings in recent years has been painting in the modern style, with as little subject matter as possible. Unfortunately, the style adopted for these murals has for the most part been the style out of which modern architecture itself derives—the straight line cut-outs of the Bauhaus, the cylindrical forms of Léger or the dry rectangles of Mondrian—all that would seem most rigid and dehumanized in modern art. This does not work well at all. Modern architecture needs as a relief from its own severity something with a great deal more ease and freedom.

THIS need is satisfied, I believe, by the painters grouped under the name of abstract expressionists. The school has many adherents both here and abroad. Pollock, De Kooning, Rothko, Matthieu are a few that come to mind. They are reputed the most revolutionary of present-day painters. In reality, this excessive comment should not frighten anyone. Judging from the work itself, they appear to form an academy of eclectic modernism. They seek to combine in their pictures—as did the Academy of Bologna—the best qualities of the painters they most admire: in this case Miro, Klee and Kandinsky instead of Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael. They employ as a rigorous working method the automatic techniques—the disciplines of spontaneity and of non-meaning—which are akin to the technique of automatic writing used by some modern poets, and which can be called academic since they are taught today in all the schools. These painters' most striking characteristics are the large size of their canvases and their systematic use of the accidents, the drips, runs and spatters which can happen in applying wet paint to a surface.

The pictures of these abstract expressionists suit admirably the modern buildings. They are large, free in execution, decorative and completely without embarrassment of subject matter. There is no story to be illustrated, no meaning the spectator can be asked to comprehend. Their subject matter—in spite of the punning, poetic or divergent titles they frequently give their pictures, and in spite of the somewhat obscure philosophizing with which

MAURICE GROSSER *is a well-known painter and author of* The Painter's Eye.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the school is promoted—is the paint surface of the picture itself. The freedom and variety of this surface marries perfectly with the habitual severity of contemporary architecture. The relative excellence of one of these pictures is easy to determine, for it depends entirely on the beauty of shapes, colors, textures and their arrangement. There is no trouble about scale; the pictures can be executed as large as needed without excessive effort on the painter's part. In short, this school has probably produced the most useful style of wall decoration yet to appear in our century.

But, however useful this work may be, and however brilliant a future I believe is in store for it, I must nevertheless insist that it belongs among the applied and not among the fine arts. Real painting has two characteristics which these pictures do not possess—it exploits a third dimension and it communicates ideas.

Painting is not the work of a solipsist. The painter acts as if he were one of Leibnitz's monads, reflecting all the other elements in the universe. As Manet said: the painter is an eye. He is a conscious being living in a special world. The drama and the tension of his painting comes from this duality: of the outside world in which he moves, and the inner world within his mind which feels, distorts, rejects and chooses. The painting which shuts itself off from the outside world and ignores its extension in space and its emotional and motor connotations, will limit its subject matter to the visceral tensions, its images to the sexual symbols and its ends to an inappropriate imitation of the art of music.

It must be admitted that a great deal of abstract expressionism's success as decoration comes from its careful avoidance of all communication. The egg-and-dart, the Greek key, the Persian pomegranate, could not be used as decorative motives until they had lost their original ceremonial meanings; the shape of an Oriental script seems pretty to us because we do not know what it means. Nevertheless, pure decoration is something painters have always sought to avoid. Picasso himself, quite early in his career, abandoned strict cubism because it seemed to lead to decoration, and to keep his pictures in the realm of legitimate painting took to using emotional and even violent subject matter. This, however, the abstract expressionists will not do. Their unrelieved loyalty to the discipline of nonmeaning renders them incapable of communicating a visual idea, or even of transmitting a personal emotion. I am aware that the artist who uses these automatic techniques is frequently convinced that his work is heavy with meaning. But these are meanings which do not communicate and which, at their clearest, express only the vast banalities of the unconscious mind.

As for the other quality which distinguishes real painting—the use of a third dimension—all appearance of depth or of solid form is so consistently absent that one is frequently led to suspect that the painters have been insufficiently trained. This, I know, is not true of De Kooning, and may be a willful affection on the part of the other painters as well. Nevertheless, their firm refusal to render space, to depict a world or to communicate an idea, whether it be from caprice or necessity, removes them from among the painters and places them among the decorators and artisans.

But this is a value judgment and has little to do with the matter at hand. The painters are skillful, inventive and sensitive. Their work is handsome, useful, and has great variety. The elements out of which it is made are well known and everywhere accepted. The publicity which promotes the school is controversial, asserting, as it does, that these painters are the bearers of some obscure and portentious message. But the pictures themselves are not controversial in any way. Once their immense value as decoration is admitted, and their negligible interest as poetry is avowed, the public resistance to these painters can only disappear and their work will receive the wide employment it so well deserves.

RECORDS

B. H. Haggin

VANGUARD'S second record of English madrigals sung by the Deller Consort, BG-554, offers on the one hand a number of fine examples of the fully matured form by Weelkes and Wilbye, two of which are outstanding: Weelkes' *Thule, The Period of Cosmography,* with its rich texture and its unusual and wonderfully expressive harmonic pro-

From The World's Greatest Novel!
PARAMOUNT PRESENTS
AUDREY HEPBURN · HENRY FONDA · MEL FERRER
in
VISTAVISION · COLOR BY TECHNICOLOR
LEO TOLSTOY'S
War and Peace
A DINO DE LAURENTIIS Production
VITTORIO GASSMAN · HERBERT LOM · OSCAR HOMOLKA · ANITA EKBERG
JOHN MILLS
PRODUCED BY DINO DE LAURENTIIS
DIRECTED BY KING VIDOR
BASED ON THE NOVEL WAR AND PEACE BY LEO TOLSTOY
NOW! COOL CAPITOL Broadway & 51st St.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gressions; and Wilbye's *Lady, When I Behold,* with wonderful harmonic progressions too. And on the other hand a number of earlier pieces by Tallis, Edwards, Johnson, Shepherd and anonymous composers, most of them lovely, and a couple—Johnson's *Defiled Is My Name* and the anonymous *The Bitter Sweet*—poignant and moving. The performances again are extraordinary in their refinement of tone and phrasing.

Listening after this to Period SPL-727, which has Dowland's *First Book of Ayres* sung as solo songs, duets and four-part madrigals, one is struck first by the less beautiful tone and less sensitive phrasing of the Pro Musica Antiqua of Brussels as a group, and by its foreign-accented English, and later by the poor voices of the tenor and bass in solo performances. But these defects don't prevent one from enjoying the beautiful pieces, of which the ones in slow tempo—*Would My Conceit; All Ye Whom Love or Fortune; Dear, If You Change,* and *Go, Crystal Tears*—are rich-textured and powerfully expressive.

DELLER'S counter-tenor and subtle phrasing are heard on Oiseau-Lyre 50102 in several engaging songs with lute accompaniment, most of them by Campian, and in the uninteresting Cantata *Jubilate Domino* by Buxtehude. Uninteresting too is the Buxtehude Fugue in C played on the organ by Denis Vaughan; but the Cantata *In Dulci Jubilo* sung by Eileen McLoughlin, soprano, Deller and Maurice Bevan, counter-tenor, is pleasant to listen to.

Another uninteresting Buxtehude piece, the *Aperite mihi portas justitiae* from a cantata for alto, tenor and bass, is on Victor LM-1968, *The Art of Aksel Schiotz,* which offers dubbings of a number of the Danish tenor's pre-war recordings. He is heard also in *"Ich will bei meinem Jesu wachen,"* one of the better arias of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion;* the uninteresting *"Frohe Hirten eilt"* from Bach's *Christmas Oratorio;* the pleasant *"Mit Würd und Hoheit"* from Haydn's *The Creation;* the fine "Every Valley" from Handel's *Messiah;* and four Mozart arias: *"Un aura amorosa"* from *Cosi fan Tutte, "Dies Bildnis"* from *The Magic Flute, "Dalla sua pace"* and *"Il mio tesoro"* from *Don Giovanni.* The deployment and inflection of the voice in phrases of melody, its suppleness in florid passages, are highly impressive; but the voice itself, which I remember thinking very beautiful when I heard it on 78-rpm records, now has a curious timbre that I find unattractive and monotonous. It may have been altered in the transfer to LP.

Anny Felbermayer, on Vanguard 481, sings the sixteen songs of Mozart that Schwarzkopf recorded on Angel 35270, and eight more, including the charming *Die Verschweigung;* but she gives only a couple of stanzas of the superb ironically humorous song *Die Alte.* Her soprano voice no longer has the exquisite crystalline quality it had, but it is still beautiful; and she uses it in these songs with admirable musical taste and expressive effect. Only in one instance does her singing fall far short of Schwarzkopf's: in *Die Alte* Felbermayer achieves nothing comparable with the pointing up of the humor by Schwarzkopf's dramatized performance. Erik Werba's piano accompaniments on the Vanguard record are not as sensitive as Gieseking's on the Angel record; and not only are Vanguard's texts less convenient to read, but the one of *Trennungslied* is a muddle which can't be related to the performance.

Angel 35219 offers the last fourteen songs of Schubert known as *Schwanengesang,* sung by Hotter with vocal beauty and flawless art in expressive phrasing, and with fine piano accompaniments by Gerald Moore.

No such vocal beauty is heard in Rehfuss' performances of Wolf's Michelangelo songs and several others on London LL-1318; and I recommend Hotter's performances of the Michelangelo songs on Angel 35057 instead. As for Musorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death* on the reverse side, Rehfuss uses the Rimsky-Korsakov falsification and sings it in French; and I therefore recommend George London's performance on Columbia ML-4906. The London record provides no texts for these songs that follow the words so closely.

Vanguard 478 now offers on one record the Mahler songs to texts from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* that were on 412/3. They are early but characteristic in moods and style; and some are very fine. Poell sings with remarkable vocal beauty, musical intelligence and expressive force; Lorna Sydney with a voice that is breathy and tremulous; and the Vienna State Opera Orchestra plays well under Prohaska.

ART

WHY MEXICO? Join American colony studying arts, crafts, Spanish, Creative Writing. . . . Beginners, professionals. . . . MFA. . . . Room, board from $60 monthly. . . . Mexico's most beautiful colonial town. . . . Illustrated prospectus? **INSTITUTO ALLENDE, Box 4, San Miguel Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico.**

LITERARY SERVICES

COMPLETE LITERARY SERVICES. Write for terms. No obligation. **Daniel S. Mead, Literary Agent, 419 Fourth Avenue, New York 16.**

HANDWRITING ANALYSIS

Complete Personality Analysis from Your Handwriting
Fee $5.00
Alfred Kanfer
62 Leroy St., New York 14, N. Y.
Endorsed by scientific authorities, hospitals, insurance companies, colleges, psych. journals.
Receiver of research grants.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

$70 WEEKLY—home, spare time. Simplified mail bookkeeping. Immediate income—easy! **Auditax, 34757EA, Los Angeles 34.**

INSURANCE

carl BRODSKY jack r.
Any kind of Insurance
Auto, Fire, Floaters, etc.; Life, Annuities
PERSONAL AND BUSINESS
799 Broadway, N.Y.C., cor. 11 St.
GR 5-3826

PERSONALS

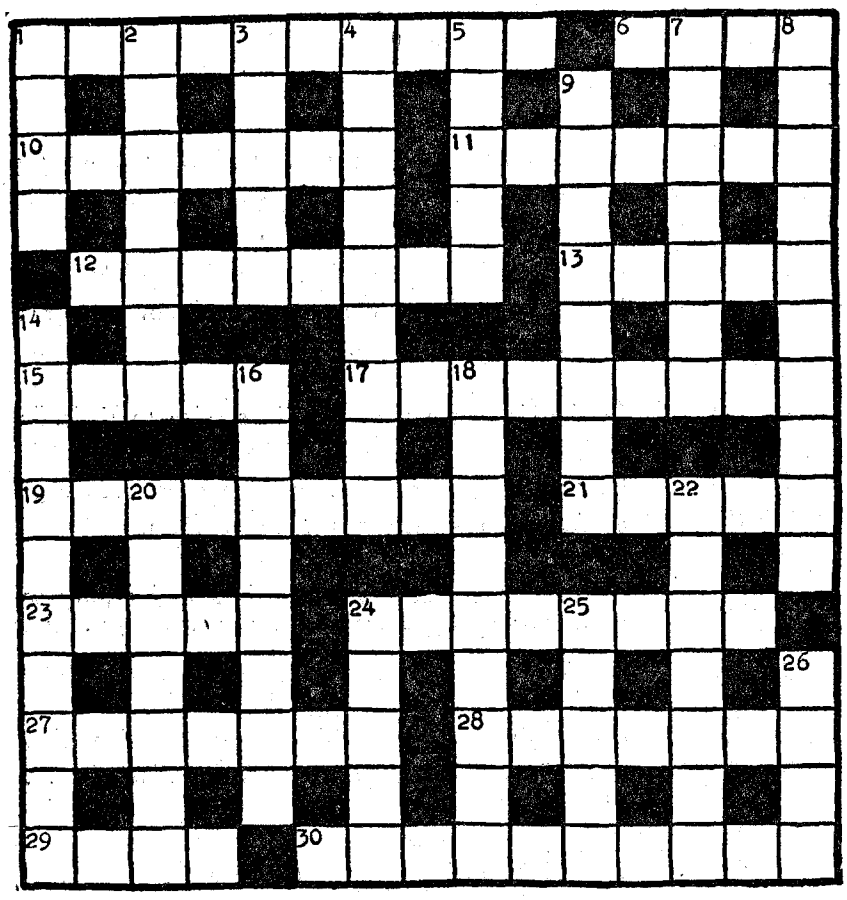
20" WINDOW FAN, 3 speeds, cools average 3-4 rooms. Regularly $52.50—**SPECIAL $24.95.** Standard Brand Dist., 143 Fourth Avenue (13th & 14th Sts.), N. Y. C. GR 3-7819. **1 hour free parking or 2 tokens.**

Advertising Rates
CLASSIFIED
74c a line (6 words)
Three-line minimum
CLASSIFIED DISPLAY
$7.42 per inch (minimum)
***The* NATION**
333 Sixth Avenue
New York 14, N. Y.
CHelsea 2-8400

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Crossword Puzzle No. 687

By FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS:

1 and 18 down Hoping past performances may not be memorable? (3, 7, 2, 7)
6 See 11 across
10 A C should be, and I got mixed up in the sort of race which is proverbially hectic. (7)
11 and 6 Wagner thought it sublime. (7, 4)
12 Commits what one might do in tracking. (8)
13 It's the limit when Australians go for this! (5)
15 The start of counterfeit notes. (5)
17 Some find their ring to make good music. (9)
19 One of thirteen that might be in hand after 11. (5, 4)
21 A long synonym. (5)
23 Another article in the 1 down, perhaps. (5)
24 Rather large with a mouse like one of the three blind ones. (Implying the second mate can't be recognized.) (8)
27 23 without the relative beginning would scarcely be pure. (7)
28 Rather unsettled, to say the least. (7)
29 One of the things that Cupid and Campaspe played at cards for. (4)
30 Is the sick actor radically so? How unfortunate! (3-7)

DOWN:

1 The authority stemming from pound or pence? (4)
2 Some tire? Quite the opposite! (7)
3 21 takes a different direction here for some time. (5)
4 A long coat, but with certainly more than one side to it. (9)
5 Crepe especially has such fine points. (5)
7 Cocked with five sides less than 4. (7)
8 Stepping back to push the bell around the exit? (10)
9 Generally speaking, used intensively around the globe. (8)
14 Attacked by a Satellite? (4-6)
16 Holmes suggested we tear such an ensign down. (8)
18 See 1 across
20 Darts, somewhat longer than spears. (7)
22 Apart from this, it's similar beneath. (7)
24 Keep out Candidate Smith? How trite! (5)
25 This snake is commonly female, at least to a degree. (5)
26 Run before the gale. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO 686

ACROSS: 1 HUNCHBACKED; 9 HANDSOME; 10 SHADOW; 11 THERAPY; 12 FLATTER; 14 DENIER; 15 HEDGEROW; 17 INVESTOR; 20 BOOTES; 22 SWALLOW; 24 BRIEFLY; 26 BREATH; 27 GALVANIC; 28 HARD-HEARTED. DOWN: 2 UNDERMINE; 4 BOER; 5 CASTLED; 6 EXALT; 7 MASHIE; 8 BOLERO; 13 AND 3 SHARECROPPER; 16 EXONERATE; 18 NEWARK; 19 TOOTHED; 20 BURGLAR; 21 ECLAIR; 23 LLAMA; 25 AGUE.

RESORTS

IN THE ADIRONDACKS
CRYSTAL LAKE LODGE

OPEN TILL SEPT. 16th

Full staff to Sept. 9th. Reduced rates from Sept. 9th to Sept. 16th. Concerts, folk and social dancing nightly by the shore of moonlit Crystal Lake. Fishing, canoeing, boating, 9 championship clay tennis courts. All sports. 1500 woodland acres.

Make reservations NOW

CHESTERTOWN 8, New York
Phone: Chestertown 3830 N.Y.C. OL 3-1884

WINDY HILL
ON ORANGE LAKE
A pleasantly informal vacation in friendly atmosphere. Swimming, Boating, Fishing on Natural Lake. Badminton, Volley Ball, Ping-pong, other sports. Records, books. Summer Theatre nearby. Food of excellent quality in generous quantity.
$50.00 Weekly; $7.50 Daily
Weekend: Fri. Supper thru Sun. Dinner $15
1½ hrs. from N.Y.C. via Thruway
Jane C. Arenz, R. D. No. 1, Walden, N. Y.
Phone: Newburgh 1232

MUSIC and CHARM, we have BOTH
ARROWHEAD LODGE
in ELLENVILLE, N. Y.
Summer theatre nearby. Clay tennis courts, entertainment, folk, square and social dancing. Painting, arts and crafts. Golf, all sports. 2 hours from N. Y. C. (Thruway).
Call CH 2-2453 Ellenville 502

50 Miles to FOREST HOUSE
Near enough for a weekend, fine enough for a season's stay. Luxury and comfort in a fireproof building. AIR-CONDITIONED and ELEVATOR-SERVICED . . . Unexcelled cuisine. Tops for sports. Nat Manners Orchestra; Benito & Gloria, dance team . . . Sophisticated entertainment.
FOREST HOUSE
Lake Mahopac, N.Y. ● Tel. Mahopac 8-3449
In N.Y.C. Phone (local rate): FAirbanks 5-7227

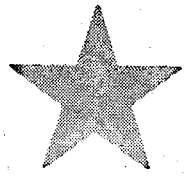
Echo Lake Lodge
In the Green Mts. Brandon, Vermont
A delightful Vacation Resort for the Entire Family
● Private sandy beach—all water sports
● New canoes, boats, swim and fish
● Tennis, ping-pong, shuffleboard
● Music, square dancing, Summer Theatres
● Cabins with private showers
Diana & Abe Berman WA 4-1440

West Point Farms
RELAX in quiet, lovely surroundings.
40 miles from N. Y.
Rooms with private bath.
Superb cuisine.
Golf next door.
New Swimming Pool.
Central Valley, New York
(Highland Mills 7895)

BUY UNITED STATES SAVINGS BONDS

Printed in the U. S. A. by RCR Publication Printers Corp., N.Y.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



What Can You Do for This "Silent Generation"?

Any Saturday you will hear them roaring, "Go! Go! Go!," for their favorite team. Yet these same vigorous voices can become curiously silent when asked to speak up for individuality. The cloak of conformity is the fad today for too many of our college and high school youngsters.

In the classroom they pay lip service to their finest heritage as Americans—the right to think independently. But in some circles it is even considered slightly *un*-American somehow *not* to conform.

To combat conformity per se is a major purpose of *The Nation*. Your gift subscription to *The Nation* for some youngster you know will expose him early to the necessity of taking a hard look at the welter of prevailing ideas and dogmas surrounding him. It will help him to learn to think for *himself* . . . to separate him from the mass-mold.

What better gift could you give a youngster!

THE Nation

SPECIAL STUDENT GIFT SUBSCRIPTION TO THE NATION—$3.90 for nine months . . . plus an attractive gift card in your name.

Your gift card and subscription will go out promptly. Simply enclose check with the coupon below, or if you prefer, we will bill you later.

GIFT DEPARTMENT
THE NATION, 333 Sixth Ave., New York City 14

Please send the following Special Student subscription for the next nine months at $3.90 and a gift card in my name to:

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... ZONE..... STATE.....

YOUR NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... ZONE..... STATE.....

9-1-56

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED